

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. **(Currently Amended)** An absorbent article comprising a liquid retentive absorbent layer containing a superabsorbent polymer and a liquid-impermeable leak proof layer, wherein an agent having a skin care effect and not causing a substantial reduction in water absorbing performance per unit weight of said superabsorbent polymer is fixed on a prescribed region of said absorbent article in a state ready to be released from that region on contact with moisture; and

wherein said superabsorbent polymer has a water absorption of 30 g/g or more in terms of physiological saline absorption measured after centrifugal dewatering.

D | 2. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein said agent is fixed on a skin-contacting surface of said absorbent article.

3. (Original) The absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein said agent comprises a water-soluble or water-dispersible plant extract.

4. (Cancelled)

5. **(Currently Amended)** An absorbent article comprising a liquid retentive absorbent layer and a liquid-impermeable leak proof layer, wherein an agent having a prescribed effect on the skin of a wearer and not causing a substantial reduction in water absorbing

performance per unit weight of said absorbent layer is fixed with a water-soluble thickener on a prescribed region of said absorbent article.

6. (Previously Presented) The absorbent article according to claim 5, wherein said agent is fixed on a skin-contacting surface of said absorbent article.

7. (Original) The absorbent article according to claim 5, wherein said agent is fixed by applying an aqueous solution or dispersion of said agent and said water-soluble thickener to said prescribed region followed by drying.

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8. (Original) The absorbent article according to claim 5, wherein said water-soluble thickener comprises polyvinyl alcohol, a carboxyalkyl cellulose, or a thickening polysaccharide.

9. (Original) The absorbent article according to claim 5, wherein said water-soluble thickener has a water dissolving temperature of 40 to 100°C.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

D | 12. (Currently Amended) An absorbent article comprising a liquid-permeable top layer, liquid impermeable leak proof layer and a liquid retentive absorbent layer interposed between said top layer and said leak proof layer, said absorbent layer containing a superabsorbent polymer, a main absorbing region in said top layer being provided with a skin-care composition consisting essentially of an agent which is released from said region, and dissolves or disburses in water upon contacting with a water content, said agent not causing a substantial reduction in water absorbing performance per unit weight of said superabsorbent polymer.

13. (Currently Amended) An absorbent article comprising a liquid-permeable top layer, liquid impermeable leak proof layer and a liquid retentive absorbent layer interposed between said top layer and said leak proof layer, said absorbent layer containing a superabsorbent polymer, a main absorbing region in said top layer being provided with a skin-care composition consisting essentially of an agent which is released from said region, and dissolves or disburses in water upon contacting with a water content, and a water-soluble thickener which fixes said agent on said region, said agent not causing a substantial reduction in water absorbing performance per unit weight of said superabsorbent polymer.

14. (Cancelled)